

Creamy, Dreamy Vegan Dressings

The heat is here already in Texas. That means salads brimming with fresh local produce show up on our table every day. While a vinaigrette dressing is always delicious, there are times something rich and creamy is in order. Here are two of my recent go-to recipes.

Tahini Ranch Dressing

When I saw the words “tahini ranch,” I was intrigued and put the recipe to test that same evening. Here is the version I ended up with after a few tests, as well as a link to the original.

- 1 cup smooth tahini (I’m loving this one from Artisana right now, raw and organic)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup lemon or lime juice (lime is my favorite)
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water (you will need more to thin if you don’t serve immediately)
- 1 spring green onion, chopped
- 2-3 tablespoons maple syrup
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 cup finely chopped dill, chives and parsley (or 1 heaping tablespoon of each, dried)

Place all ingredients in a high speed blender and enjoy on your next salad!

Adapted from NYT Cooking

Green Goddess Dressing

This gorgeous dressing just needs some fresh, chopped romaine

and tomato wedges – or feel free to experiment with your own raw veggie base.

- 1 cup fresh parsley stems and leaves (I prefer the flat-leafed Italian)
- 1 cup packed fresh watercress or spinach leaves, stemmed
- 2 tablespoons tarragon leaves, rinsed (dried tarragon works equally well)
- 3 tablespoons minced chives
- 1 shallot or 2 green onions
- 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar or white balsamic vinegar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sunflower oil or mild olive oil
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup vegan mayo (I like Just Mayo)
- Salt and pepper to taste

Place all ingredients in a high speed blender and thin with water to achieve the desired consistency. Enjoy!

Adapted from NYT Cooking

Chard Packets

Honestly, I don't know which came first. I LOVE this recipe. I adore the creator's photography. I am amused by their name – KrautKopf (cabbage head). And I was pleasantly surprised to find this couple lives in Berlin.

So, let's talk about these adorable bundles of goodness I can't wait to share with you. I have to admit, one look at the picture and I made a dash to Wheatsville to pick up rainbow chard – how could I resist? The remaining ingredients were items I keep on hand, so putting this together was simple.

I find these bundles so appealing because of the flexibility in the filling ingredients – if you haven't noticed, I do like to change things up a bit! I can imagine using a base of black lentils or chickpeas. I also appreciate the ability to advance prep (even the night before) and choose whether I eat them hot or cold. I even considered baking them next time with a spicy tomato sauce drizzled over, and a bit of cashew cream.

This recipe makes a wonderful, plant-based dinner, full of alkalizing ingredients and complete with protein. Thank you Yannic and Susann of KrautKopf for sharing your talents!

Ingredients

- 10 big chard leaves with stalk
- 3 shallots
- 3 garlic cloves
- 1 chili pepper
- Lemon juice
- 1/3 C (75 g) red lentils
- Vegetable stock
- 1 tsp za'atar
- 1 apricot (a few dried will do as well)
- 3/4 C (200 g) small tomatoes
- Parsley
- 1 tsp olive oil
- Sea salt
- Pepper

Directions

Thoroughly wash the chard. Remove stalks by cutting a wedge out of the leaves. Then dice the stalks. Also chop the shallot, garlic and chili pepper and sweat in olive oil, then add the chard stalks and stew for 10 minutes until they are done. Deglaze with lemon juice, and season with salt and pepper.

Cook the lentils in vegetable stock according to package instructions. Slightly press with a fork and season with za'atar. Stone and dice the apricot and add to the lentils. Seed the tomato and chop the pulp into small pieces. Also chop some parsley and add with 1 teaspoon olive oil to the tomatoes. Season with salt and pepper and let it soak. Then drain the water of the tomatoes.

Blanch the chard leaves in a big pot of salted water, rinse with cold water, then drain well and dry.

Stuff the leaves with the individual components and fold to a packet and cord it. Fry shortly in olive oil. You can also eat the packets cold and if you mix the stuffings, you get a yummy salad! If you don't like to cord the packets, just chop the leaves and add them to the stewed stalks.

Enjoy!

Adapted from KrautKopf

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Salt-Crusted Potatoes with Cilantro Mojo

I am super fortunate to live with two open-minded eaters. They not only put up with my kitchen experiments, they fully participate with suggestions and ideas (sometimes a few more than I am prepared for!). So, when my husband holds up a gorgeous, salt-crusted potato on his fork and declares it perfect, I take him seriously. Allow me to share this delightfully simple, "perfect" potato dish (by the way, there

was not one morsel left at the end of the meal).

Ingredients

- 2 1/4 pounds small, evenly sized waxy new potatoes, such as fingerling or creamers, scrubbed but unpeeled
- Sea salt flakes
- 3 large garlic cloves, roughly chopped (or shallots)
- 1 green chili pepper, seeded and chopped (half a serrano)
- Leaves from a bunch of fresh cilantro, roughly chopped (and an equal amount of basil)
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground cumin seeds
- 3/4 cup toasted, unsalted pistachios
- Scant 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 teaspoons white wine vinegar, Muscatel if possible (or lemon or lime juice)
- Himalayan salt to taste

Directions

1. Put the potatoes into a wide, shallow pan in which they fit in a single layer. Add 2 tablespoons salt and 1 quart cold water (just enough to cover), bring to a boil, and leave to boil rapidly until the water has evaporated. Then turn the heat to low and continue to cook for a few minutes, gently turning the potatoes over occasionally, until they are dry and the skins are wrinkled and covered in a thin crust of salt.
2. While the potatoes are cooking, make the cilantro mojo. Put the garlic, green chili pepper, and 1 teaspoon salt in a mortar, and pound into a paste. Add the cilantro leaves, and pound until they are incorporated into the paste. Add the cumin, and gradually mix in the oil to make a smooth sauce. Just before serving, add the vinegar, and spoon into a small bowl.
3. Pile the hot potatoes onto a plate and serve with the

mojo, instructing your guests to rub off as much salt from the potatoes as they wish before dipping them in the sauce.

Enjoy!

Adapted from Jose Pizarro's recipe.

Originally published Sept. 25, 2015.

Turmeric Coconut Rice with Greens

Our CSA box arrived filled to the brim with greens again – no surprise this time of year! In search of a new meal, I stumbled on this yummy recipe in the New York Times Cooking archive. Rice can be real comfort food for me, and this recipe also presents a perfect opportunity to incorporate a healthy portion of fresh greens. You'll notice by the photo that I took the liberty to add a handful of pan roasted mushrooms and green beans to create a veggie-forward dish.

Ingredients

- 2 cups long-grain rice, such as jasmine or basmati
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup unsweetened coconut flakes
- 1 tablespoon white or black sesame seeds
- 2 tablespoons coconut oil
- 1 scallion, thinly sliced, white and green parts separated
- 1 teaspoon ground turmeric
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon black pepper, plus more as needed
- 1 (14-ounce) can full-fat coconut milk

- Pinch of saffron (allow this to bloom for 10 minutes in a small amount of boiling water)
- Kosher salt
- 1 medium bunch kale, spinach or Swiss chard (or a mix of all three)
- 1 lime

Directions

1. Rinse rice until water runs clear. Drain and set aside.
2. In a medium pot or Dutch oven, toast the coconut and sesame seeds over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally, until fragrant, 3 to 5 minutes (adjust heat as needed to prevent burning). Transfer to a small bowl. Wipe out the pot.
3. In the same pot, melt the coconut oil over medium-low heat. Add the scallion whites, turmeric and 1/2 teaspoon black pepper and cook, stirring, until aromatic and lightly toasted, 3 to 5 minutes.
4. Add the rice, coconut milk, saffron (if using) and 1 1/2 teaspoons salt. Fill the empty can of coconut milk with water and add it to the pot. Give the mixture a good stir to separate any lumps and bring to a boil over medium-high.
5. Once boiling, cover, turn the heat to low, and simmer for 10 minutes.
6. As rice cooks, remove and discard the tough stems of the leafy greens, if needed, and cut or tear the leaves into bite-size pieces. When the rice has cooked for 10 minutes, arrange the greens on top of the rice in an even layer and season well with salt and pepper. Cover, and cook until the rice is tender, 5 more minutes. Remove from heat and let sit, covered, 5 minutes.
7. As rice rests, zest the lime and cut it into wedges. Add 1/2 teaspoon zest to the coconut-sesame mixture, along with the scallion greens. Season with salt and pepper and stir to combine.

8. Gently stir the greens into the rice using a spatula or fork, season to taste with salt and pepper. Divide among bowls. Sprinkle the coconut mixture on top and serve with a lime wedge for squeezing over.

Enjoy!

Adapted from Ali Slagle's One-Pot Tumeric Coconut Rice and Greens

Caramelized Onion Ramen

Vegan chef Meera Sodha wins again when the weekend rolls around and I want to try something new. This wonderful soup is full of flavor and the perfect opportunity to use up any spring braising greens.

Here's her recipe with my adaptations in parentheses.

Ingredients

- 4 tbsp rapeseed oil, plus a little extra to coat the noodles (or sunflower oil)
- 3 large white onions, peeled and finely sliced
- 3 garlic cloves, peeled and finely sliced
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt
- 1 red chili, finely sliced
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ liters vegetable stock
- 2 tbsp cooking sake (optional)
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ tbsp light soy sauce (or coconut aminos)
- 1 tbsp brown miso paste
- Salt and black pepper
- 200 g ramen noodles (or rice pad thai noodles, gluten free and vegan)

- 200 g choy sum, cut into 6 cm pieces (or baby bok choy or chinese broccoli)
- Chili oil, to serve (optional)

Directions

In a large, heavy-bottomed saucepan, warm the oil over medium heat. Add the onions, garlic and salt to the pan. Stir to coat all veggies in oil, cooking 10 minutes until onions become slick and translucent.

Reduce heat to low and continue to cook 30 minutes, stirring every five minutes. The onions will gradually start to caramelize and color, eventually breaking down into a soft, sweet, caramel-colored paste.

Add the chili and stock to the pan, bring to a boil, then turn the heat down to a simmer and add sake, soy and miso, stirring well to combine. Taste, adjust the seasoning, then turn off the heat.

Cook the noodles according to the packet instructions, then drain, rinse under cold water and stir in a little oil to keep them from sticking together.

Just before serving, bring the broth up to a boil and drop in the choy sum and cook for a minute or two, until just tender.

Divide the noodles between four bowls and ladle the broth over the top, making sure to share out the greens evenly. Drizzle over the chili oil, if using, and serve.

Enjoy!

Adapted from The New Vegan.

Super Seeded Crackers

Here is a recipe to beat all boxed versions – and it's easier than you think. Play around with the seasonings. Your options are endless!

Ingredients

- 1/4 cup brown or white rice flour
- 1/4 cup teff flour
- 1/2 cup almond flour
- 2 tbsp ground flax
- 2 tbsp hemp
- 2 tbsp sesame seeds
- 2 tbsp chia seeds
- 1/2 tsp kosher salt
- 1/2 tsp dried thyme
- 1 tsp dried rosemary
- scant 1/4 tsp baking soda
- 1/4 cup water (add by the teaspoon if more is needed)
- 1 tsp olive oil

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F and line a baking sheet with parchment.
2. In a large bowl, mix the dry ingredients. Add wet ingredients and mix well. Knead the dough until it comes together. Shape into a ball.
3. Place ball of dough on parchment paper or a non-stick mat. Roll out dough until it's about 1/8 inch thick, or as thin as you can get it without ripping. With a pastry wheel or pizza slicer, score the dough for crackers.
4. Bake at 350°F for 18-20 minutes until slightly golden. You will want to bake long enough for the crackers to be crisp.
5. Cool on baking sheet for 10 minutes. Store in an air-

tight container once fully cool.

Enjoy!

Recipe adapted from *Oh She Glows*.

Chocolate Chip Cookies

I declare this to be THE best gluten-free vegan cookie recipe. And to be sure my claim was true I tested the recipe three times in the last two weeks ☐ It feels pretty much no-fail, and to make things even easier we tried it as a bar cookie recipe and it was fantastic. We can all thank Alexa Peduzzi for taking the time to test and share this on her Fooduzzi blog.

Here you go...

Ingredients

- 1 and 1/2 cups almond flour – *I used a mixed nut blend by Pamela's that also worked well* (spooned and leveled)
- 3 Tbsp. coconut flour (spooned and leveled)
- 3/4 tsp. baking soda
- pinch salt
- 2 Tbsp. melted coconut oil (make sure it isn't hot!)
- 3 Tbsp. peanut butter (or your favorite nut butter)
- ¼ cup + 2 Tbsp. pure maple syrup
- splash pure vanilla extract
- about 2 and 1/2 oz. vegan dark chocolate, chopped or in chip form

- coarse salt to top, optional

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.
2. Add almond flour, coconut flour, baking soda, and salt to a large bowl and whisk to combine. Be sure to remove any large almond flour lumps.
3. In a small bowl, add melted coconut oil, peanut butter, maple syrup, and vanilla, and mix to combine.
4. Add your wet ingredients to your dry, and mix. When it's almost combined, add in your chopped chocolate. The batter will be stiff.
5. Measure out 2-Tbsp. of dough, and shape it into a thick, flat circle. These cookies won't spread, so be sure to shape them how you want them to look. Place your cookies on a baking sheet, and put the sheet in the freezer for 10 minutes.
6. *Alternatively, press into a rectangular baking dish and follow the same directions from freezer to oven.*
7. Remove sheet from freezer and bake for 11 minutes if in cookie form and 15 if in a pan, until slightly golden brown. Sprinkle with coarse salt if desired.
8. Allow cookies to cool for 5 minutes on the baking sheet, then carefully move them to a cooling rack to cool completely. Store at room temperature.

Enjoy!

Cauliflower Chaat

Honestly, you can't have too many recipes for cauliflower. This one went together in a snap and was the perfect way to use two sweet and tender heads I picked up at the farmers

market this weekend. Here's a Cauliflower Chaat from the New York Times Cooking Section with some creative adaptations.

Ingredients for the cauliflower:

- 10 tablespoons sunflower or coconut oil
- 2 small heads cauliflower, cut into bite-sized florets
- Salt to taste
- 4 teaspoons finely chopped ginger
- 4 teaspoons finely chopped jalapeño pepper
- 4 tablespoons chopped cilantro
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons chaat masala (spice mix)
- 2 cups cooked Basmati rice

Ingredients for the sauce:

- 2 cups cilantro
- 1 jalapeño pepper
- 1 small white onion
- 1 garlic clove
- 4 tablespoons of coconut or almond yogurt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of cumin
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 4 tablespoons roughly chopped roasted almonds

Optional toppings

- 1 seeded pomegranate
- 1 can of chickpeas, rinsed, drained and pan roasted with a bit coconut oil and cumin to add a bit of crisp and flavor

Preparation

Heat the oil in a sauté pan on med-high heat, until the oil just begins to smoke in small wisps. Add the cauliflower

florets and lower the heat to medium. Sprinkle with salt and allow the florets to brown in the pan, then stir and turn the heat down to medium. Cook for another minute or two, then add ginger and jalapeño. Stir well, combine cilantro, lemon juice, and chaat masala, and stir again.

Remove pan from heat and cover.

Prepare the sauce: Place all ingredients plus 2 tablespoons water in a small food processor and purée until smooth, stopping to scrape down the sides and incorporate everything. Taste and season with salt and pepper.

Drizzle sauce over the cauliflower and sprinkle with almonds, pomegranate seeds, and chickpeas.

Serve with rice.

Enjoy!

Adapted from the: *The Joy Of Cooking For One*, as seen in the *New York Times*.

A Farmer's Market Salad

When tender stems of baby broccoli, French breakfast radishes, and gorgeous Russian kale made their appearance last week at the Farmer's Market, I saw the makings of a perfect spring salad. A big thank you to River Bottom Farms for their commitment to sustainable, organic produce. With ingredients that are this fresh and delicious, all that's needed is some chopping and a yummy sauce to dress it. While a simple vinaigrette would be perfectly fine, I like to use something a little creamy to stand up to the textures of this veggie mix. You'll find my favorite hemp and miso dressing below with two

flavor options.

Here are the super simple instructions to make this salad at home:

- Baby broccoli, finely chopped including the tender stems (often sold as broccolini)
- A handful or more of radishes, grated if large enough, or sliced thin
- Russian kale, stemmed and finely chopped
- Carrots, peeled and grated

All of these ingredients can be prepped by hand or use a veggie bullet to finish this task in a jiffy. Mix together with the miso dressing in a large salad bowl an hour before serving.

Hemp-Miso Dressing

- 1/2 cup fresh lemon juice or apple cider vinegar
- 1/4 cup of water
- 1/4 cup of olive oil (for an oil-free version increase the water to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup)
- 3/4 cup hemp seeds
- 2 tablespoons of honey or maple syrup
- 2 tablespoons white or chickpea Miso

For more flavor choose one of the following sets of ingredients to add before blending:

Creamy Herb – A pinch of garlic powder, onion powder, and mineral salt, a few strands of chives, along with a few sprigs of fresh dill and parsley

Ginger Mustard – 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard, old style whole grain and raw, 1 tablespoon ginger, freshly grated

Blend all dressing ingredients in a high powered blender. Consider doubling the batch as this will keep for three days

when refrigerated.

Enjoy!!!

Veggieful Tacos

Yes, this is really another taco recipe – and just weeks after sharing one with pan-roasted Brussels sprouts. If I promise this is it for now, will you give it a try? You really won't want to miss the ease and practical way to get your veggie quota for the day.

Pictured above is how we typically roll on taco night. I roast whatever veggies happen to be leftover from the week, cook a pot of pinto or black beans and serve it all alongside some salsa and avocado. If there are cheese lovers at your table you might try Kite Hill Ricotta or any of these choices from Parmella Creamery. As for tortillas, there are so many options these days, from grain-free choices by Siete to the handmade corn tortillas we find along the taco belt in Texas.

Here are the suggested ingredients with simple instructions to make up your own weeknight taco feast. Feel free to change up the vegetables to suit your family and what you have on hand.

Oven Roasted Veggies

Preheat oven to 425 F. Cut all veggies into cubes or slices, toss with coconut or sunflower oil, season with salt and pepper. Place on baking trays lined with parchment paper. These cook up well, but you might try other combos:

- Purple sweet potatoes
- Sweet peppers
- Onion

- Portobello Mushrooms

Pan Roasted Veggies

In a heavy skillet saute sliced stems in a bit of oil, over medium heat with a few slices of onion and flakes of red pepper. When the stems begin to soften, add the chopped leaves. Cover with a lid, turning down the heat cooking until just wilted.

- Chopped Red Chard

Serve tacos with:

Salsa or Pico de Gallo

Sliced ripe avocado

Serve up veggies on a large platter, tortillas in a pan to keep warm. I recommend assembly to begin with mashing a slice or two of ripe avocado in the center of the tortilla, topping that with a spoon of beans if desired, fitting in as many veggies as you possible, topped with a healthy bit of salsa to add some heat. Enjoy!

Weeknight Curry

Hands down the easiest and most satisfying midweek meal at my house is a Thai Curry. The beauty of curry is that you can use almost any leftover vegetables in your fridge, and with the right sauce, and a bit of steamed rice it will be a hit. Pictured above is this week's curry of sweet peppers, onions, baby bok choy, shiitake mushrooms, and a few fingerling potatoes. If you're new to this, you might want to begin with a standard base of onions, peppers, and mushrooms and build from there depending on what's available.

My curry game immensely improved when I discovered this Thai and True Curry Paste available online. They have several options to choose from, but yellow curry is my current favorite. If I can rally a bit of help chopping veggies, I can have this on the table in 30 minutes.

Ingredients

- 1 medium onion or leek, sliced thin
- 1-2 sweet red or yellow bell peppers, sliced thin
- 1lb of baby bella, white, or shiitake mushrooms, sliced
- Fresh greens: 6-8 baby bok choy chopped, or 8-12 large leaves of collards or kale, stemmed and chopped
- Starchy vegetables like fingerling potatoes, sweet potatoes, a kabocha or delicata squash or yellow summer squash. Cut into bite-sized chunks.
- 1 can whole fat coconut milk
- Curry paste to taste, 1-2 tablespoons
- Coconut oil for sauteing vegetables
- Juice from one lime

Follow these simple steps:

1. Rinse and put your rice on to cook. I am a fan of white basmati.
2. Place squash or potatoes in a steamer and cook until fork tender. Don't overcook as we want it to retain its shape in the curry.
3. In a heavy skillet or wok, over medium heat, melt coconut oil and add sliced onions (or leeks) and sweet pepper. Cook to soften. Remove to a plate. Add more oil to the pan and cook the mushrooms.
4. Once mushrooms are cooked return onions and peppers to pan. Add greens, covering with a lid to lightly steam. Once greens have wilted stir in curry paste, mixing in well.
5. Pour in coconut milk, stir well and gently blend in

- steamed veggies.
- 6. Serve with rice.

Enjoy!

Bitchin' Brussels Sprout Tacos

Yes, you read that right. Stop the eye rolling right now. Seriously. These are amazing, and if you're as big a fan of Brussels Sprouts as I am, you will thank me. Truthfully I can't really call this a recipe. It's more like a list of ingredients because they go together so easily. Depending on what part of the world you are reading this post, the ingredient Bitchin' Sauce may sound pretty strange. Don't despair as I have included a link to make your own. Be sure to make plenty as this spicy almond sauce tastes good on literally everything (except possibly chocolate).

Ingredients

- Olive oil – enough to cover the bottom of the skillet
- Brussels Sprouts – cut off ends and cut in half, place in heavy skillet with olive oil over medium heat. Give them a good shake once the cut side is seared and cover. Cook until just fork tender being careful not to overcook. Season with salt, pepper, and smoked paprika if you have some on hand.
- One ripe avocado – cut in half, peeled and sliced For cutting tips, check out this guide.
- Salsa – storebought or homemade
- Original Flavor Bitchin' Sauce (or even better make your own)

- The best non-GMO, lard-free corn tortillas you can find (another shout out for Chepos in SMTX)

I assemble mine by mashing the avocado on the tortillas, topping it with a teaspoon of salsa, then the brussels sprouts and finally a drizzle of Bitchin' Sauce.

I'm looking forward to your comments on this one!